City of Seattle

Department of Construction & Inspections
Nathan Torgelson, Director

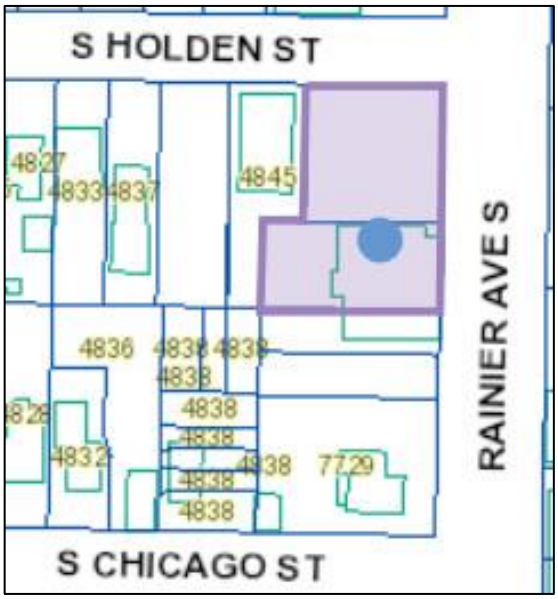
DESIGN REVIEW

FIRST EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE SOUTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number:	3026791
Address:	7713 Rainier Avenue South
Applicant:	Michelle Linden, Atelier Drome, LLP
Date of Meeting:	Tuesday, June 27, 2017
Board Members Present:	Julian Weber (Chair) Sharon Khosla Charles Romero David Sauvion
Board Members Absent:	Carey Dagliano Holmes
SDCI Staff Present:	Brandon Cummings, Land Use Planner

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone:	Neighborhood Commercial 2- 40’
Nearby Zones:	(North) NC2-40 (South) NC2-40 (East) NC2-40 (West) LR3
Lot Area:	26,768 sq. ft.



Current Development:
The development site is comprised of four parcels, located at the southwest corner of Rainier Avenue South and S Holden Street. The site is currently vacant.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:
The development site is located in the Rainier Beach neighborhood, characterized by a mix of small multifamily developments and single-family homes in the immediate vicinity. Commercial activity in this area is located primarily along Rainier Avenue South. In general, the Rainier Beach neighborhood consists of a mix of households and is a community supported by its strong cultural and social institutions.

Access:
The location of the development site makes it easily accessible to vehicles traveling along Rainier Avenue South, a main arterial connecting the neighborhood to other communities and to Downtown. There is no vehicular access to the site available via an alley. Several metro bus stops, primarily located on Rainier Avenue South, S Othello Street, and Martin Luther King Jr. Way, and the Othello light rail station are located within a ¼ mile of the development site and provide access to many areas of the city including Downtown, the University District, the Central District, and the Airport. There is also a strong network of existing sidewalks throughout the neighborhood, connecting the development site to the numerous metro bus stops and light rail station.

Environmentally Critical Areas:
Steep Slope and Liquefaction Prone Environmentally Critical Areas are present on site.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Design Review Early Design Guidance application proposing a three-story, 28-unit apartment building with street level retail. Surface parking for 20 vehicles to be provided. Existing structure to be demolished.

The design packet includes information presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number at this website:
http://www.seattle.gov/DPD/aboutus/news/events/DesignReview/SearchPastReviews/default.aspx

The packet is also available to view in the file, by contacting the Public Resource Center at SDCI:

Mailing Address:	**Public Resource Center** 700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000 P.O. Box 34019 Seattle, WA 98124-4019
Email:	PRC@seattle.gov

PUBLIC COMMENT

The following public comments were offered at this meeting:

- Supported more activity and development at this location which is currently vacant.
- Supported promoting activity along Rainier Avenue South.
- Believed Options 1 and 3 to be most successful, and that Option 2 incorporated too much modulation into the façade. Suggested simple massing moves would be better.
- Supported smaller retail spaces that could accommodate smaller neighborhood businesses.

The following comments from the Seattle Department of Transportation were submitted to SDCI in writing prior to the meeting:

- SDOT supports land use code requirements along S Holden St, including cubs, sidewalk and street trees. Vehicle access, if provided, should be from S Holden St, in accordance with land use code guidelines for neighborhood commercial zones, Vision Zero recommendations, and efficient vehicle and transit operations along Rainier Ave S.

- The site is located adjacent to a recently improved transit stop, and SDOT has plans to continue to improve transit speed and reliability on Rainier Ave S. To facilitate access to transit and to create a more welcoming pedestrian area, SDOT recommends 8' wide sidewalks along Rainier Ave S. This is voluntary.

One purpose of the design review process is for the Board and City to receive comments from the public that help to identify feedback and concerns about the site and design concept, identify applicable citywide and neighborhood design guidelines of highest priority to the site and explore conceptual design, siting alternatives and eventual architectural design.

All public comments submitted in writing for this project can be viewed using the following link and entering the project number: http://web6.seattle.gov/dpd/edms/

PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, the Design Review Board members provided the following siting and design guidance.

1. **Massing and Façade Composition**: The Board discussed the three massing alternatives, which were similar in how the structure was located on the development site, creating a strong street edge along Rainier Avenue South. There were concerns about the linear nature of the three options, the lack of strong vertical elements to break up the façades, and the

lack of a massing alternative showing a different approach to site development. Also discussed in detail were the lack of articulation and breaks in the massing of the structure and how the long façade impacts the residents to the west. **(CS2-D-1. Existing Development and Zoning, CS2-D-3. Zone Transitions, CS2-D-4. Massing Choices)**

a. The Board was very concerned with the perceived massing of the structure and recommended incorporating additional modulation and secondary architectural elements in the development of the east and west façades to further break down the massing to an appropriate scale. **(DC2-A-2. Reducing Perceived Mass, DC2-C. Secondary Architectural Features)**

b. The Board recommended incorporating the use of strong vertical elements in the design of the façade to complement the horizontal nature of the proposed structure. The Board suggested this could be accomplished through the use of modulation to increase the perceived height of the structures without increasing the floor area. **(DC2-B-1. Façade Composition)**

c. The Board was concerned with the treatment of all façades and the blank wall condition facing the residential zone. The Board recommend exploring a design where there is activation on both sides of the building as the west façade will be prominent to the neighborhood and those traveling to the site by car. **(PL3-C-1. Porous Edge, PL3-C-2. Visibility, DC2-B-2. Blank Walls)**

d. The Board supported the notion that the urban edge created by location the massing primarily along Rainier Avenue South could serve as a precedent for subsequent development in the area. The Board considered public comment and supported the added verticality of the sawtooth roof form and setback of the retail spaces shown in Option 1 and the larger corner gesture as shown in Option 3. The Board recommended a massing alternative is provided that incorporates these elements and continues to develop them further. **(CS2-A-2. Architectural Presence, CS2-C-1. Corner Sites**, **CS3-A-4. Evolving Neighborhoods)**

2. **Impact on Adjacent Properties:** The Board was very concerned with the visual impact and layout of the parking area, citing the lack of an adequate buffer between the cars and the adjacent property. The Board recommended reconfiguring the parking and incorporate screening elements to minimize its impact on the adjacent properties. **(DC1-B-1. Access Location and Design, DC1-C-2. Visual Impacts)**

3. **Street Level Engagement**:

a. The Board agreed with public comment and was concerned with the depth of the retail spaces presented in the massing options and recommended developing a design that allows these spaces to actively engage with the street and strengthen the pedestrian experience, and serve as placemaking opportunities. **(CS1-B-2. Daylight and Shading, CS2-B-2. Connection to the Street, DC1-A. Arrangement of Interior Uses, CS2-A-1. Sense of Place)**

b. The Board was concerned with pedestrian activity throughout the site and supported the use of a viable pedestrian connection through the structure connecting the parking area to the west of the site to the primary commercial entries along Rainier Avenue South. The Board suggested the lobby as shown could be expanded to achieve this activated space. **(PL1-B-1. Pedestrian Infrastructure)**

4. **Landscaping and Open Space**: The Board was concerned with the lack of landscaping and open space throughout the development site as shown and recommended a design that maximizes the open space as currently proposed and encourages a connection to the community. The Board also suggested utilizing landscaping and open areas to activate the edges of the structure which allow for placemaking opportunities. **(CS2-A-1. Sense of Place, CS2-B-3. Character of Open Space, PL1-A-1. Enhancing Open Space)**

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

The Board's recommendation on the requested departure(s) will be based on the departure's potential to help the project better meet these design guidelines priorities and achieve a better overall project design than could be achieved without the departure(s). The Board's recommendation will be reserved until the final Board meeting.

At the time of the **FIRST** Early Design Guidance no departures were requested.

DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

The priority Citywide and Neighborhood guidelines identified as Priority Guidelines are summarized below, while all guidelines remain applicable. For the full text please visit the Design Review website.

CONTEXT & SITE

CS1 Natural Systems and Site Features: Use natural systems/features of the site and its surroundings as a starting point for project design.

CS1-B Sunlight and Natural Ventilation

CS1-B-1. Sun and Wind: Take advantage of solar exposure and natural ventilation. Use local wind patterns and solar gain to reduce the need for mechanical ventilation and heating where possible.

CS1-B-2. Daylight and Shading: Maximize daylight for interior and exterior spaces and minimize shading on adjacent sites through the placement and/or design of structures on site.

CS1-B-3. Managing Solar Gain: Manage direct sunlight falling on south and west facing facades through shading devices and existing or newly planted trees.

CS2 Urban Pattern and Form: Strengthen the most desirable forms, characteristics, and patterns of the streets, block faces, and open spaces in the surrounding area.

CS2-A Location in the City and Neighborhood

CS2-A-1. Sense of Place: Emphasize attributes that give a distinctive sense of place. Design the building and open spaces to enhance areas where a strong identity already exists, and create a sense of place where the physical context is less established.

CS2-A-2. Architectural Presence: Evaluate the degree of visibility or architectural presence that is appropriate or desired given the context, and design accordingly.

CS2-B Adjacent Sites, Streets, and Open Spaces

CS2-B-2. Connection to the Street: Identify opportunities for the project to make a strong connection to the street and public realm.

CS2-B-3. Character of Open Space: Contribute to the character and proportion of surrounding open spaces.

CS2-C Relationship to the Block

CS2-C-1. Corner Sites: Corner sites can serve as gateways or focal points; both require careful detailing at the first three floors due to their high visibility from two or more streets and long distances.

CS2-D Height, Bulk, and Scale

CS2-D-1. Existing Development and Zoning: Review the height, bulk, and scale of neighboring buildings as well as the scale of development anticipated by zoning for the area to determine an appropriate complement and/or transition.

CS2-D-3. Zone Transitions: For projects located at the edge of different zones, provide an appropriate transition or complement to the adjacent zone(s). Projects should create a step in perceived height, bulk and scale between the anticipated development potential of the adjacent zone and the proposed development.

CS2-D-4. Massing Choices: Strive for a successful transition between zones where a project abuts a less intense zone.

CS2-D-5. Respect for Adjacent Sites: Respect adjacent properties with design and site planning to minimize disrupting the privacy of residents in adjacent buildings.

CS3 Architectural Context and Character: Contribute to the architectural character of the neighborhood.

CS3-A Emphasizing Positive Neighborhood Attributes

CS3-A-2. Contemporary Design: Explore how contemporary designs can contribute to the development of attractive new forms and architectural styles; as expressed through use of new materials or other means.

CS3-A-4. Evolving Neighborhoods: In neighborhoods where architectural character is evolving or otherwise in transition, explore ways for new development to establish a positive and desirable context for others to build upon in the future.

CS3-B Local History and Culture

CS3-B-1. Placemaking: Explore the history of the site and neighborhood as a potential placemaking opportunity. Look for historical and cultural significance, using neighborhood groups and archives as resources.

PUBLIC LIFE

PL1 Connectivity: Complement and contribute to the network of open spaces around the site and the connections among them.

PL1-A Network of Open Spaces

PL1-A-1. Enhancing Open Space: Design the building and open spaces to positively contribute to a broader network of open spaces throughout the neighborhood.

PL1-A-2. Adding to Public Life: Seek opportunities to foster human interaction through an increase in the size and quality of project-related open space available for public life.

PL1-B Walkways and Connections

PL1-B-1. Pedestrian Infrastructure: Connect on-site pedestrian walkways with existing public and private pedestrian infrastructure, thereby supporting pedestrian connections within and outside the project.

PL1-B-2. Pedestrian Volumes: Provide ample space for pedestrian flow and circulation, particularly in areas where there is already heavy pedestrian traffic or where the project is expected to add or attract pedestrians to the area.

PL1-B-3. Pedestrian Amenities: Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian oriented open spaces to enliven the area and attract interest and interaction with the site and building should be considered.

PL2 Walkability: Create a safe and comfortable walking environment that is easy to navigate and well-connected to existing pedestrian walkways and features.

PL2-A Accessibility

PL2-A-1. Access for All: Provide access for people of all abilities in a manner that is fully integrated into the project design. Design entries and other primary access points such that all visitors can be greeted and welcomed through the front door.

PL2-A-2. Access Challenges: Add features to assist pedestrians in navigating sloped sites, long blocks, or other challenges.

PL2-B Safety and Security

PL2-B-1. Eyes on the Street: Create a safe environment by providing lines of sight and encouraging natural surveillance.

PL2-B-2. Lighting for Safety: Provide lighting at sufficient lumen intensities and scales, including pathway illumination, pedestrian and entry lighting, and/or security lights.

PL2-B-3. Street-Level Transparency: Ensure transparency of street-level uses (for uses such as nonresidential uses or residential lobbies), where appropriate, by keeping views open into spaces behind walls or plantings, at corners, or along narrow passageways.

PL2-C Weather Protection

PL2-C-1. Locations and Coverage: Overhead weather protection is encouraged and should be located at or near uses that generate pedestrian activity such as entries, retail uses, and transit stops.

PL2-C-2. Design Integration: Integrate weather protection, gutters and downspouts into the design of the structure as a whole, and ensure that it also relates well to neighboring buildings in design, coverage, or other features.

PL2-D Wayfinding

PL2-D-1. Design as Wayfinding: Use design features as a means of wayfinding wherever possible.

PL3 Street-Level Interaction: Encourage human interaction and activity at the street-level with clear connections to building entries and edges.

PL3-A Entries

PL3-A-1. Design Objectives: Design primary entries to be obvious, identifiable, and distinctive with clear lines of sight and lobbies visually connected to the street.

PL3-A-2. Common Entries: Multi-story residential buildings need to provide privacy and security for residents but also be welcoming and identifiable to visitors.

PL3-B Residential Edges

PL3-B-4. Interaction: Provide opportunities for interaction among residents and neighbors.

PL3-C Retail Edges

PL3-C-1. Porous Edge: Engage passersby with opportunities to interact visually with the building interior using glazing and transparency. Create multiple entries where possible and make a physical and visual connection between people on the sidewalk and retail activities in the building.

PL3-C-2. Visibility: Maximize visibility into the building interior and merchandise displays. Consider fully operational glazed wall-sized doors that can be completely opened to the street, increased height in lobbies, and/or special lighting for displays.

PL3-C-3. Ancillary Activities: Allow space for activities such as sidewalk vending, seating, and restaurant dining to occur. Consider setting structures back from the street or incorporating space in the project design into which retail uses can extend.

PL4 Active Transportation: Incorporate design features that facilitate active forms of transportation such as walking, bicycling, and use of transit.

PL4-A Entry Locations and Relationships

PL4-A-1. Serving all Modes of Travel: Provide safe and convenient access points for all modes of travel.

PL4-A-2. Connections to All Modes: Site the primary entry in a location that logically relates to building uses and clearly connects all major points of access.

DESIGN CONCEPT

DC1 Project Uses and Activities: Optimize the arrangement of uses and activities on site.

DC1-A Arrangement of Interior Uses

DC1-A-1. Visibility: Locate uses and services frequently used by the public in visible or prominent areas, such as at entries or along the street front.

DC1-A-2. Gathering Places: Maximize the use of any interior or exterior gathering spaces.

DC1-A-3. Flexibility: Build in flexibility so the building can adapt over time to evolving needs, such as the ability to change residential space to commercial space as needed.

DC1-A-4. Views and Connections: Locate interior uses and activities to take advantage of views and physical connections to exterior spaces and uses.

DC1-B Vehicular Access and Circulation

DC1-B-1. Access Location and Design: Choose locations for vehicular access, service uses, and delivery areas that minimize conflict between vehicles and non-motorists wherever possible. Emphasize use of the sidewalk for pedestrians, and create safe and attractive conditions for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers.

DC1-C Parking and Service Uses

DC1-C-2. Visual Impacts: Reduce the visual impacts of parking lots, parking structures, entrances, and related signs and equipment as much as possible.

DC1-C-4. Service Uses: Locate and design service entries, loading docks, and trash receptacles away from pedestrian areas or to a less visible portion of the site to reduce possible impacts of these facilities on building aesthetics and pedestrian circulation.

DC2 Architectural Concept: Develop an architectural concept that will result in a unified and functional design that fits well on the site and within its surroundings.

DC2-A Massing

DC2-A-1. Site Characteristics and Uses: Arrange the mass of the building taking into consideration the characteristics of the site and the proposed uses of the building and its open space.

DC2-A-2. Reducing Perceived Mass: Use secondary architectural elements to reduce the perceived mass of larger projects.

DC2-B Architectural and Facade Composition

DC2-B-1. Façade Composition: Design all building facades—including alleys and visible roofs— considering the composition and architectural expression of the building as a whole. Ensure that all facades are attractive and well-proportioned.

DC2-B-2. Blank Walls: Avoid large blank walls along visible façades wherever possible. Where expanses of blank walls, retaining walls, or garage facades are unavoidable, include uses or design treatments at the street level that have human scale and are designed for pedestrians.

DC2-C Secondary Architectural Features

DC2-C-1. Visual Depth and Interest: Add depth to facades where appropriate by incorporating balconies, canopies, awnings, decks, or other secondary elements into the façade design. Add detailing at the street level in order to create interest for the pedestrian and encourage active street life and window shopping (in retail areas).

DC2-D Scale and Texture

DC2-D-1. Human Scale: Incorporate architectural features, elements, and details that are of human scale into the building facades, entries, retaining walls, courtyards, and exterior spaces in a manner that is consistent with the overall architectural concept

DC2-D-2. Texture: Design the character of the building, as expressed in the form, scale, and materials, to strive for a fine-grained scale, or “texture,” particularly at the street level and other areas where pedestrians predominate.

DC3 Open Space Concept: Integrate open space design with the building design so that they complement each other.

DC3-A Building-Open Space Relationship

DC3-A-1. Interior/Exterior Fit: Develop an open space concept in conjunction with the architectural concept to ensure that interior and exterior spaces relate well to each other and support the functions of the development.

DC3-B Open Space Uses and Activities

DC3-B-1. Meeting User Needs: Plan the size, uses, activities, and features of each open space to meet the needs of expected users, ensuring each space has a purpose and function.

DC3-B-2. Matching Uses to Conditions: Respond to changing environmental conditions such as seasonal and daily light and weather shifts through open space design and/or programming of open space activities.

DC3-B-3. Connections to Other Open Space: Site and design project-related open spaces to connect with, or enhance, the uses and activities of other nearby public open space where appropriate.

DC3-B-4. Multifamily Open Space: Design common and private open spaces in multifamily projects for use by all residents to encourage physical activity and social interaction.

DC3-C Design

DC3-C-2. Amenities/Features: Create attractive outdoor spaces suited to the uses envisioned for the project.

DC4 Exterior Elements and Finishes: Use appropriate and high quality elements and finishes for the building and its open spaces.

DC4-A Exterior Elements and Finishes

DC4-A-1. Exterior Finish Materials: Building exteriors should be constructed of durable and maintainable materials that are attractive even when viewed up close. Materials that have texture, pattern, or lend themselves to a high quality of detailing are encouraged.

DC4-B Signage

DC4-B-1. Scale and Character: Add interest to the streetscape with exterior signs and attachments that are appropriate in scale and character to the project and its environs.

DC4-B-2. Coordination with Project Design: Develop a signage plan within the context of architectural and open space concepts, and coordinate the details with façade design, lighting, and other project features to complement the project as a whole, in addition to the surrounding context.

DC4-C Lighting

DC4-C-1. Functions: Use lighting both to increase site safety in all locations used by pedestrians and to highlight architectural or landscape details and features such as entries, signs, canopies, plantings, and art.

DC4-C-2. Avoiding Glare: Design project lighting based upon the uses on and off site, taking care to provide illumination to serve building needs while avoiding off-site night glare and light pollution.

DC4-D Trees, Landscape, and Hardscape Materials

DC4-D-1. Choice of Plant Materials: Reinforce the overall architectural and open space design concepts through the selection of landscape materials.

DC4-D-2. Hardscape Materials: Use exterior courtyards, plazas, and other hard surfaced areas as an opportunity to add color, texture, and/or pattern and enliven public areas through the use of distinctive and durable paving materials. Use permeable materials wherever possible.
DC4-D-3. Long Range Planning: Select plants that upon maturity will be of appropriate size, scale, and shape to contribute to the site as intended.
DC4-D-4. Place Making: Create a landscape design that helps define spaces with significant elements such as trees.

RECOMMENDATIONS

BOARD DIRECTION
At the conclusion of the FIRST EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE meeting, the Board recommended the project return for another meeting in response to the guidance provided.